

HOW TO CLEAN, SEAL & LOOK AFTER NATURAL STONE TILES

Natural stone tiles create a luxurious and earthy atmosphere in the home, whether they are used to create a tiled splashback in the kitchen, a feature bathroom wall or as a stylish tile flooring option throughout your interiors. It is important to note however that natural stone tiles as well as terracotta tiles, terrazzo and even concrete tiles will require different methods of sealing as well as cleaning in comparison to porcelain or ceramic products in order to ensure a high quality finish.

Our guide details some of the key points to keep in mind when it comes to caring for and maintaining your natural stone tiles, including the different sealants and cleaning products that will best suit these timeless options.



Classic, timeless and elegant, natural stone tiles such as our rich marble [Pompei collection](#) create an air of luxury in the home. Their stunning tonal variations and depth of colour offer the perfect option in creating a design scheme with endless appeal.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF TILE MATERIALS

NATURAL MARBLE TILES

Natural marble tiles can be sourced in a large range of varieties including luxurious Carrara, Calacatta or New York Marbles as well as in assorted colours such as green (as seen in the rare Connemara marble varieties or traditional Jade Marble) as well as blush (as seen in the Rosa Levante marbles).



One of the most popular choices in natural marble tiles, [Calacatta tiles](#) offer an exquisite blend of deep grey and gold veins over a soft white backdrop. These luxurious tiles can be paired with an impressive range of different materials and finishes to help you create that perfect design scheme in your next project.

Marble tiles can be easily paired with a range of different materials and finishes, offering an extremely versatile option that simply oozes luxury – It is no wonder that natural marble tiles have stood the test of time the world over with their impressive strength and classic charm!

TERRACOTTA TILES

A long favoured choice for the home, terracotta tiles continue to be made using traditional methods. Natural clays are combined with iron compounds to produce the distinct rusty tones that have become synonymous with traditional terracotta tiles to create a warm, earthy atmosphere in any application.



The [Prato Terracotta tile collection](#) is handmade using traditional techniques in Mexico. These luscious, earthy tiles offer a warm and characteristic charm to any design scheme while also offering the flexibility of being suitable as both a floor or wall option.

As with natural stone tiles, terracotta tiles can usually be used as either a floor or wall option, making them an incredibly versatile option that will add timeless charm and elegance to your next interior design project. You will also find some specific varieties that can be used in outdoor applications (usually where they will be installed in an area with a cover that will protect the material from the elements) once again allowing you flexibility in your material selections for the home.

CONCRETE TILES

Concrete tiles (also commonly referred to as encaustic tiles) are created using a poured cement mixture that is dried out and hardened. Colourful dyes can be added to the mixture and different patterns and styles can be achieved with the use of shaped moulds or forms to create various designs.



Concrete tiles (also referred to as encaustic tiles) will often feature delightful patterns in geometric or floral and lacework style intricate patterns. These tiles will also show a stunning range of deep, chalky colours and shades that define this style of tile making. Our [Greg Natale Cubo collection](#) includes a range of bold geometric styles to help you create traditional, transitional or modern interior design styles in your next renovation.

Although concrete is not a natural stone, caring for these tiles is very similar to that of the process involved in caring for a natural product in that concrete is also porous and requires ongoing sealing in order to protect it from marking or staining. The repeating patterns and dusty colour options available in concrete or encaustic tiles can be used throughout the home to add an energetic and dramatic touch to your interiors, providing endless appeal for many years to come.

TERRAZZO TILES

Traditionally made terrazzo tiles are made using a cement mixture that includes pieces of natural stones (most often marble or granite) and sometimes coloured glass that are embedded into the tile to create a unique, speckled pattern. These tiles were first created as a means of using up often wasted materials from the construction and manufacturing industries, thus saving these precious products from landfill and creating a new material that is impressively hard wearing and long lasting.



Terrazzo tiles continue to be created using traditional methods with pieces of natural stones and often coloured glass as well into a bed of concrete to create a unique, speckled finish. Our [Ditto Terrazzo Kit Kat Tiles](#) combine the timeless beauty of terrazzo with the modern mosaic tile format for a new spin on this classic option.

WHAT IS TILE SEALER?

Tile sealers are products that are applied to porous tiles that assist in protecting the material over time from dirt, grime, moisture and staining. These products can be applied onto the surface of the tiles before laying (which is often recommended so that the tiles are not stained or marked by any tile adhesives and grouts or during the cleaning process while laying your new tiles). Your new tiles should then be sealed every few years thereafter in order to best maintain the product.

The two most popular types of tile sealers include: Impregnating (or Penetrating) Sealers and Topical Sealers (or Coatings).

Impregnating/Penetrating Sealers: Providing a defence against water, oils efflorescence, salt, freeze-thaw spalling (this term refers to damage that has been caused to tiles after water has entered the body of the tile, become frozen and as a result, has expanded in the tile's pores) as well as picture framing (this tile term refers to the effect of marks left along the edges of each individual tile alongside the grout lines that can appear as a result of moisture having entered into the pores of the tile from the grouted edges), these types of sealers penetrate into the body of the tiles themselves.

Impregnating or penetrating sealers will not block the pores of your natural stone tiles but will work to repel liquids and moisture from entering the material. Furthermore, you will also note that the colour of your tiles is not altered by the application of these types of sealers, making them a popular choice for any application.

Topical/Coating Sealers: As suggested by the name, topical or coating type sealers are applied topically to the surface of the tiles. Unlike impregnating or penetrating sealers, this type of product will effectively block up the tile's pores while assisting in keeping your tiles free from moisture. Depending on your tile selection and its intended application however, this can be seen as a drawback as your tiles will not be able to 'breathe'. This can also lead to moisture building up behind the actual tiles themselves which can potentially lead to a build-up of mould. These drawbacks, coupled with the fact that these types of sealers can also potentially alter the colour of your stone tiles, have led to this product being used much less in the tiling industry in favour of impregnating sealer options.

Your Perini Tiles consultant will recommend the most suitable tile sealer for your specific selection and will advise on the best application and maintenance methods to ensure your tiles remain in the best shape possible throughout their lifespan.

TILE CLEANING PRODUCTS

Sealing your tiles is an excellent step in ensuring they remain looking their absolute best throughout their lifespan. All of the tile options listed above will require sealing as each of these selections are porous. Coupled with the right cleaning techniques and products, your natural stone tiles should last a lifetime! As natural stone tiles are often more sensitive to acidic products and harsh cleaners, once again you will find specific items are available for different types of stone to ensure a perfect result every time.

For regular routine maintenance of natural stone tiles, terrazzo or concrete tiles, Perini Tiles recommends the use of **Lithofin MN Easy-Care** products; this cleaner is diluted in lukewarm water before being spread across the surface of your tiles. It can then gently wiped before being mopped up or wiped down (in the case of wall tiles) leaving the surface of your tiles looking as new.

In areas that experience more wear and foot traffic, you can include **Lithofin MN Power-Clean** in your cleaning routine; this product should be used sparingly as it is specifically designed for a deeper clean of these stone tile materials. Once again, this cleaning product must be diluted in water and applied to your tiles with a brush. Allow the cleaner to sit for 10-20 minutes (depending on the stubbornness of the dirt or marks on the tiles) while brushing occasionally to ensure the product does not dry up. Wipe away with a mop or soft cloth before thoroughly washing the area to remove any residue.

Natural stone tiles as well as the rustic man-made options of concrete and terrazzo offer a distinctly warm and timeless element to any style of design. It is important to ensure that best sealing and cleaning practices are considered during the tile selection process as these factors will ensure your tiles truly stand the test of time. Our team of Design Consultants at Perini Tiles will assist you in selecting the perfect natural stone tiles, coordinating grout colours and complementing finishes such as benchtops, wall paints and cabinetry where necessary. Visit our [tiles showroom in Richmond](#) or schedule a [free online tiles selection](#) to get started on your next project!

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